

JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE HELD PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 241 TO HEAR AN ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The Speaker of the House presided.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Jim Varey, announced the Vice President and Members of the U.S. Senate, who entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, the Vice President taking the chair at the right of the Speaker, and the Members of the Senate the seats reserved for them.

The SPEAKER. The Chair appoints as members of the committee on the part of the House to escort the President of the United States into the Chamber:

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. ARMEY);

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY);

The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS);

The gentleman from California (Mr. COX);

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON);

The gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE);

The gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT);

The gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BONIOR);

The gentleman from Texas (Mr. FROST);

The gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ);

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY); and

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. SNYDER).

The VICE PRESIDENT. The President of the Senate, at the direction of that body, appoints the following Senators as members of the committee on the part of the Senate to escort the President of the United States into the House Chamber:

The Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT);

The Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. NICKLES);

The Senator from South Carolina (Mr. THURMOND);

The Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG);

The Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER);

The Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON);

The Senator from South Dakota (Mr. DASCHLE);

The Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID);
The Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI);

The Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY);

The Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN);

The Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX);

The Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER);

The Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN); and

The Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG).

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency Jesse B. Marehalau, Ambassador to the United States from Micronesia.

The Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seat reserved for him.

The Deputy Sergeant at Arms announced the Cabinet of the President of the United States.

The members of the Cabinet of the President of the United States entered the Hall of the House of Representatives and took the seats reserved for them in front of the Speaker's rostrum.

At 9 o'clock and 12 minutes p.m., the Sergeant at Arms, Mr. Wilson Livingood, announced the President of the United States.

The President of the United States, escorted by the committee of Senators and Representatives, entered the Hall of the House of Representatives, and stood at the Clerk's desk.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

The SPEAKER. Members of the Congress, I have the high privilege and the distinct honor of presenting to you the President of the United States.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

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THE STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The PRESIDENT. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress, honored guests, my fellow Americans: We are fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. Never before has our Nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity and social progress with so little internal crisis and so few external threats. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity and, therefore, such a profound obligation to build the more perfect union of our founders' dreams.

We begin the new century with over 20 million new jobs; the fastest economic growth in more than 30 years; the lowest unemployment rates in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates on record; the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years.

Next month, America will achieve the longest period of economic growth in our entire history.

We have built a new economy.

Our economic revolution has been matched by a revival of the American spirit: Crime down by 20 percent, to its lowest level in 25 years. Teen births down 7 years in a row. Adoptions up by 30 percent. Welfare rolls cut in half to their lowest levels in 30 years.

My fellow Americans, the state of our union is the strongest it has ever been.

As always, the real credit belongs to the American people.

My gratitude also goes to those of you in this Chamber who have worked with us to put progress over partisanship.

Eight years ago, it was not so clear to most Americans there would be much to celebrate in the year 2000. Then our Nation was gripped by economic distress, social decline, political gridlock. The title of a best-selling book that year asked: "America: What Went Wrong?"

In the best traditions of our Nation, Americans determined to set things right. We restored the vital center, replacing outmoded ideologies with a new vision anchored in basic, enduring values: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans.

We reinvented government, transforming it into a catalyst for new ideas that stress both opportunity and responsibility, and give our people the tools they need to solve their own problems.

With the smallest Federal workforce in 40 years, we turned record deficits into record surpluses, and doubled our investment in education. We cut crime: with 100,000 community police and the Brady Law, which has kept guns out of the hands of half a million criminals.

We ended welfare as we knew it, requiring work while protecting health care and nutrition for children, and investing more in child care, transportation, and housing to help their parents go to work. We have helped parents to succeed at home and at work with family leave, which 20 million Americans have now used to care for a newborn child or a sick loved one. We have engaged 150,000 young Americans in citizen service through AmeriCorps, while helping them earn money for college.

In 1992, we just had a roadmap. Today, we have results. Even more important, America again has the confidence to dream big dreams. But we must not let this confidence drift into complacency. For we, all of us, will be judged by the dreams and deeds we pass on to our children. And on that score, we will be held to a high standard, indeed. Because our chance to do good is so great.

My fellow Americans, we have crossed the bridge we built to the 21st century. Now, we must shape a 21st-century American revolution, of opportunity, responsibility, and community. We must be now, as we were in the beginning, a new Nation.

At the dawn of the last century, Theodore Roosevelt said, "The one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight. It should be the growing nation with a future that takes the long look ahead."

Tonight, let us take our long look ahead and set great goals for our Nation.

To 21st century America, let us pledge these things:

Every child will begin school ready to learn and graduate ready to succeed.